

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL RECIFE

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SUBJ: GEISEL DEFINES HUMAN RIGHTS IN TERMS OF SOCIAL PROGRESS

REF: A) BRASILIA 7580; B) BRASILIA 8816; C) RIO DE JANEIRO 5137

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT GEISEL, IN RECENT SPEECHES TO THE SUDENE CONSULTANT COUNCIL AND TO ARENA CONGRESSMEN REAFFIRMED HIS ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS, EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. GEISEL CAREFULLY EQUATED HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS, PLACING THEM IN THE CONTEXT OF BRAZILIAN INSTITUTIONS AND A BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY WHICH REFLECTS THE COUNTRY'S CURRENT LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, NOT ONLY IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SENSE, BUT ALSO WITH REGARD TO NATIONAL CHARACTER AND SUSCEPTIBILITY TO INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES. PRESS HAS CHIDED GEISEL FOR HIS RESTRICTIVE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY

2. SPEAKING AT THE CLOSING CEREMONIES OF A MEETING OF THE SUDENE (SUPERINTENDENCY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHEAST) CONSULTANT COUNCIL IN JOAO PESSOA OCTOBER 21, PRESIDENT GEISEL AFFIRMED HIS
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COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN WHAT HE TERMED THE SOCIAL AREA. IN A SPEECH STRESSING (1) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACCOMPLISHED IN BRAZIL'S BACKWARD NORTHEAST AND (2) DISPARITY BETWEEN POOR NORTH-EAST AND RICHER SOUTH, GEISEL STATED, "THE SOCIAL AREA IS PARTICULARLY WORRISOME SINCE IT CALLS FOR SPECIAL CARE TO PREVENT EXOTIC DOCTRINES FROM EXPLOITING OUR POVERTY AND TAKING HOLD IN OUR MIDST. WE MUST WORK HARDER IN THE SOCIAL AREA TO OBTAIN MORE EQUALITY

AMONG THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE. IT IS BY GIVING THEM HOUSING, EDUCATION, HEALTH-CARE AND WORK THAT WE CAN RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE POPULATION ALONG WITH THE LEVEL OF HUMAN DIGNITY... THESE ARE THE HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH WORRY ME, WHICH ARE FORGOTTEN BY MANY, AND WHICH I HAVE TRIED TO IMPROVE... AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE."

3. THE SPEECH REITERATED THE THEME GEISEL USED IN AUGUST AT CEREMONIES INAUGURATING A JOINT FEDERAL-STATE SANITATION PROJECT IN SAO PAULO. AT THAT TIME, HE STATED THAT "OUR SOCIAL PROGRAM IS ESSENTIALLY A PROGRAM OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ALTHOUGH MANY DO NOT WISH TO RECOGNIZE IT. TO PROVIDE HOUSING, WATER, HEALTH CARE AND SEWERS IS PART OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WHEN WE IMPROVE THE SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THE CITY, WE ARE PRESERVING HUMAN RIGHTS."

4. IN AN OCTOBER 26 ADDRESS TO ARENA CONGRESSMEN MARKING THE OPENING OF ARENA'S MILTON CAMPOS FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM ON DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL POLICY, PRESIDENT GEISEL AGAIN ADDRESSED HUMAN RIGHTS IN TERMS OF SOCIAL PROGRESS. AFTER REFERRING TO THE "COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL POLICY AND DEMOCRACY," HE CALLED FOR A "MORE PRECISE AND REALISTIC DEFINITION OF (BRAZILIAN) DEMOCRACY" IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A BETTER BASIS FOR CONSENSUS AND A BETTER MODEL FOR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. GEISEL STRESSED WHAT HE TERMED THE RELATIVE NATURE OF ALL DEMOCRATIC AND AUTHORITARIAN STATES. HE PROFESSED SURPRISE THAT SOME PEOPLE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND SUCH "A SIMPLE PHRASE AS RELATIVE DEMOCRACY," NOTING THAT EACH COUNTRY CREATES ITS OWN INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ITS LEVEL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF DEVELOPMENT AND MATURITY. PRESIDENT ADDED THAT "SERVICE TO MAN SHOULD BE THE STANDARD TO MEASURE ALL THINGS" AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF "SECURITY AND FREEDOM BASED ON THE LAW."

5. SENATE MAJORITY LEADER REZENDE CALLED SPEECH A "PROFESSION OF FAITH IN DEMOCRACY AND THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE," BUT OTHER ARENA CONGRESSMEN WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT PRESIDENT HAD NOT USED OCCASION TO DESCRIBE HIS IDEAS ON RE-DEMOCRATIZATION.

6. WRITING IN REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S JOAO PESSOA SPEECH, JORNAL DO BRASIL COLU KIST CASTELLO BRANCO CHIDED GEISEL'S "RESTRICTED CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS." CASTELLO SAID THAT GEISEL WAS DETERMINED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH POLITICAL REFORMS, AND THAT SENATOR PORTELLA'S EFFORTS TO CREATE A DIALOGUE (REFTELS A AND B) WERE NOT AIMED AT GAINING TIME AND POSTPONING THE SUCCESSION DEBATE. CASTELLO, HOWEVER, EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF THE PORTELLA MISSION, NOTING THAT "BETWEEN THE REVOLUTIONARY STATE AND THE DEMOCRATIC STATE THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE SOLUTION, AS EACH HAS ITS OWN LAWS."

7. JORNAL DO BRASIL FOUND GEISEL'S ASSERTIONS IN HIS OCTOBER 26 SPEECH BASED ON A "QUESTIONABLE NOTION" OF WHAT DEMOCRACY AND

DEMOCRATIC PROGRESS ARE. JORNAL SAID THAT A "RELATIVE DEMOCRACY" CAN ALSO BE A "RELATIVE AUTOCRACY," CAUTIONING THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT A RELATIVE STATE. ESTADO DE SAO PAULO WROTE THAT IML WAS NOT THE EXPRESSION "RELATIVE DEMOCRACY" WHICH DISCOMFORTED IT, BUT THE PRESIDENT'S "INSISTENCE IN WANTING TO ORGANIZE BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY BY MEANS OF DOGMATIC INDOCTRINATION AND AUTHORITARIAN AFFIRMATION." CASTELLO BRANCO ALSO ATTACKED PRESIDENT'S DOGMATISM, CALLING IT THE MAIN CHARACTERISTIC OF DICTATORSHIPS, AND INSPIRATION FOR SUCH ORGANS AS THE DOI-CODI, RECENTLY ACCUSED OF TORTURING PRISONERS (REFTEL C).

8. SENATE MAJORITY LEADER EURICO REZENDE COMPLEMENTED PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS SPEECHES WITH A DEFENSE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IN THE SENATE OCTOBER 21. REZENDE SAID GEISEL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"WAS ALWAYS RESPECTFUL OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADOPTING ENERGETIC MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO NEWS OF VIOLATIONS IN THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS." REZENDE ALSO SAID THAT SOME ABUSES WERE INEVITABLE IN ANY COUNTRY, WHICH PROMPTED THE JORNAL DO BRASIL TO ACIDLY NOTE THAT THOSE COUNTRIES THAT TRULY DO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS, UNLIKE BRAZIL, PUNISH VIOLATORS.

9. COMMENT. REZENDE HAS BEEN CALLING FOR PUNISHMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS. IN AUGUST HE ASKED FELLOW SENATORS TO DENOUNCE "ANY AND EVERY ACT OF VIOLENCE, TORTURE AND MISTREATMENT THAT CAME TO THEIR ATTENTION." MORE RECENTLY (REFTEL C) IN RESPONSE TO ACCUSATIONS AUTHORITIES HAD ABUSED STUDENT PRISONERS IN RIO, REZENDE PROMISED THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR TORTURE WOULD BE PUNISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT. END COMMENT CRIMMINS

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